



**Valeria Aoki, MD, PhD**

Associate Professor (Tenure Track) and Director of the Cutaneous Immunopathology Laboratory,  
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Since Dr. Aoki started her residency in dermatology at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, she has been interested in understanding autoimmune/infectious/inflammatory skin diseases in tropical countries. After completing her dermatology clinical training supported by a Dermatology Foundation scholarship from 1992 to 1994, she had the opportunity to spend two years as a research fellow in Immunodermatology under the supervision of Prof. Luis A. Diaz, previously the chairman and head of the immunodermatology laboratory from the Department of Dermatology, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI, USA. The research project addressed the environmental triggers of endemic pemphigus foliaceus, also known as fogo selvagem (FS), an autoimmune blistering dermatosis with a complex etiology and unique epidemiologic features. Upon returning to Brazil, Dr. Aoki was invited to stay as a co-investigator of the above project, collaborating on the characterization of the clinical, epidemiological, and immunological profiles of FS patients in certain endemic areas of Brazil. For this project, she contributed dermatologic expertise, performing annual clinical follow-up of FS patients using seroepidemiologic surveillance of three groups of cohorts (ages 5-20) to detect potential risk factors of FS in endemic areas of the disease (native Brazilian reservations).

Dr. Aoki also has clinical interest in blistering diseases, inflammatory dermatoses (atopic dermatitis), and mentoring PhD students and postdoctoral fellows at the University of Sao Paulo. She is a board member of the International Eczema Council (IEC), co-chair of IEC's education committee, and editor of the European Journal of Dermatology and Venereology, among numerous other accomplishments.